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Sunday July 30, 2006

## Casey funds delayed until beef programs are audited

LIBERTY - Funds for cattle-related programs administered by the state Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy are being delayed for Casey County until an audit on the beef programs has been completed.

James Young, recordkeeper for beef projects for Casey County Cattlemen's Association, said he was unaware of the audit until it was mentioned in an article that ran in a June issue of The Advocate-Messenger and other newspapers across the state.

However, Keith L. Rogers, executive director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, disagrees. He said Young and other members of the Cattlemen's Association were aware of the audit.

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Rogers said he met with some of the members last year to talk about problems with the way farmers were being chosen to take part in the beef projects. He said Young was not following state guidelines.

The chairman of the Casey County Agricultural Development Council did not attend the meeting, but he thinks Rogers is right.

Greg Goode, chairman of the Casey council, said he also talked with Brian Furnish, deputy director of the state agricultural policy office, last week about the beef program funds and learned the funds are being held in the cattle program until after the audit.

Goode has scheduled a meeting Thursday to discuss the farm programs and audit. This will be the first county ag council meeting this year.

**Agenda includes Goat Association request**

The agenda will include discussions on the beef programs and Central Kentucky Goat Association's request for new funding and the swearing in of two new board members.

Rogers said he met last summer with members of the Casey County Agricultural Development Council and told them the cattle programs were not being operated properly. He said Young did not agree with the state guidelines on the cattle programs.

"They agreed last September to operate by the guidelines, and a letter came back acknowledging the information," Rogers said. "They were told last summer they would be audited and reviewed at the end of the cycle. They are on probation."



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The matter came about after Marion Murphy, former chairman of the Casey ag council, reported that Young was not following the state guidelines when selecting farmers to participate in the programs.

"The county was suppose to select by scoring on who gets the program money but did it another way," said Rogers. It's not unusual to want to operate differently than the state guidelines, but most of the programs operate smoothly, he added.

Young said the guidelines in 2005 clearly permit the use of the first-come, first-served basis and a waiting list, and the 2006 guidelines required a point system. He said that Casey is operating under the old guidelines until the 2005 program runs out.

Young has requested the audit be done as soon as possible and not wait until September when the audit is scheduled.

He said that \$472,000 of funds allocated for Casey County are being held by the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy.

"I am confident an audit will reveal that Casey County Cattlemen's Association has met all applicable guidelines," he said, adding the concerns the state agency has should have been addressed months ago through contact with him.

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